

TIPS FOR

RAISING

HEALTHY

KIDS





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Tips For Raising Healthy Kids

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The Vital Link Between Your Health & Your Child's Health

The past few decades have produced a lot of research linking a father's health to his children's health.

According to the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, obese children are more likely to live in father-absent homes than are non-obese children. There are many aspects of health that are affected by father involvement. Here are a few:

- High-quality interaction by any type of father predicts better infant health.
- When fathers are involved in their children's lives it drastically reduces the likelihood that their child will smoke, use drugs or drop out of high school.
- Body Mass Index is a measurement of the relative composition of fat and muscle mass in the human body. Research shows that a child's BMI directly correlates with their father's BMI.
- Additionally, a fathers' BMI is directly related to a child's activity level. In a study of 259 toddlers, more active children were more likely to have a father with a lower BMI than were less active children.
- Children living with their married biological or adoptive parents have better access to health care than children living in any other family type.
- Obesity in fathers is associated with a four-fold increase in the risk obesity for their children. Therefore, as a father, it is important to model healthy eating and to make sure that your family has the knowledge and tools to make healthy nutritional choices.
- Over 20 percent of unmarried women reported smoking during pregnancy, compared to 7 percent of married mothers.
- Children of families who eat together are more likely to have a stronger vocabulary, perform better in school and have a healthier weight.

Chapter 1 • Physical Health



You must care for yourself in order to care for your child. After all, you now know how a dad’s health is critical to his child’s health and well-being.

In *Tips for Raising Healthy Kids*, we will cover your physical and mental health and how you can be intentional about being the best dad you can be while helping your child be healthy and strong.

Understanding Physical Health

Let’s be honest: as men, we are raised to bury and ignore our physical problems. We’re taught that our bodies should be able to “take a licking and keeping on ticking,” which leads us to abuse our bodies and ignore warning signs that tell us we need help. What often happens is that we ignore the signs for so long that, by the time we go to the doctor, it’s often too late. The worse part of this is that we often teach this way of living to our children — even if unintentionally.

The Workout Plan

You have no doubt heard the old saying, “By not planning, you are planning to fail.” Without creating a plan for regular physical exercise, becoming healthy will never happen.

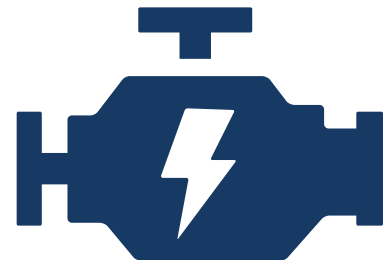
A good workout plan has at least 3 parts.

1. What will you do to for regular physical exercise.
2. When you will do the exercise — how often.
3. Who will you involve (e.g. a friend/family member).

12 Ways to Stay Healthy

If you were a car, which one would you be? Whether it's a racecar, sedan or SUV, you won't run well if you don't keep yourself tuned up. Your body and total health are no different. When was your last "tune up"?

Here Are 12 Ways to Keep Your "Engine" Running & Finely Tuned



1. Know Your Family History

How good were your parents' engines? You might be at risk for certain diseases because of your genes. If your father or mother, aunt or uncle had diabetes, heart disease, certain cancers (such as colon or prostate cancer) or mental illness, then you might be at risk for developing them. Talk with your doctor about getting tested for diseases you might be at risk for.

2. Fuel Your Engine — Eat Healthy

Your diet will fuel your engine. While there are lots of diets to choose from, the diet you choose needs to fit your lifestyle and budget. Pick a diet that is low in fat and high in fiber. Eat from many food groups for a balanced diet and make sure your diet has lots of color. A good rule is to eat fruits and vegetables that are red, yellow, green, orange, and purple. If you find it a challenge to eat a balanced diet rich in color, consider taking a multi-vitamin every day. Consider talking with your doctor first before taking a multi-vitamin or any other supplement.

3. Rev Your Engine — Exercise

You should get at least 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week. An easy way to do this is to walk at a fast pace. Skip the elevator and take the stairs. As you move into your 40s and 50s, you'll need to lift weights to keep your muscles fit. As you age, the amount of time you spend lifting weights should increase.

4. Don't Overwork Your Engine — Maintain a Healthy Weight

Men come in different sizes and shapes. Still, there is a healthy weight for every man.

Chapter 2 • Mental Health

Mental health is the ability to adjust to and meet the demands of everyday life. “Good” mental health means the ability to think things through so that you can adjust to and meet the demands in your life in ways that don’t harm you or others.



Mental health affects your physical health and your physical health affects your mental health. If you have a problem with your mental health, it will show up in your body. If you have a problem with the health of your body, it will affect your mind and how you see the world.

Stress is one of the main signs of the link between mental and physical health. Stressors are the things in life that cause or contribute to stress. You can’t avoid or control many of the stressors in your life, but you can control the way you handle stress.

14 Tips for Handling Stress

1. Exercise

Working out increases your strength and stamina.

2. Eat Right

Stress and diet are closely linked. You know what you should eat. The key is eating and not settling for unhealthy, fast foods. One cheeseburger won’t kill you, but a cheeseburger every other meal? It might be time to consider changing your diet.

3. Get Enough Sleep

Get at least six to eight hours sleep a night. Take naps during the day if you can’t get enough sleep. Even “power naps” — 15 to 30 minutes of rest where you close your eyes — help reduce stress. Think you’re too manly for naps? Winston Churchill took naps. He was manly. He claimed naps allowed him to get twice as much accomplished in one day. Churchill said of naps, “Nature has not intended mankind to work from eight in the morning until midnight without that refreshment of blessed oblivion which, even if it only lasts twenty minutes, is sufficient to renew all the vital forces.”

Chapter 3 • Your Child's Health



We hear a lot about the link between moms and their children's health, but what about the role that dads play? There is a "Father Factor" in every stage of your child's health and growth. The following pages reveal how you can make a difference in your child's health.

Your Child's Health

There are many ways you can make a difference in your child's health. Here are 8 ways that you can help keep your child healthy.

8 Ways to Keep Your Child Healthy

1. Get Involved Before Your Child is Born

Your child's health begins before he or she is born. Regular prenatal care has been linked to healthier outcomes for children. Your child's mother needs to get started with prenatal care as soon as you find out you're going to have a child together. Studies show that women are more likely to get regular prenatal care if dads are involved. Throughout the pregnancy, ask the mother of your child how you can help support and encourage her; as her body changes, her needs might change, as well. Involved dads mean healthier moms.

2. Help Your Child Start with a Healthy Weight at Birth

Low birth weight (less than 5 and 1/2 pounds at birth) has been linked to early infant death. Children born into father absent homes are almost twice as likely to die before their first birthday. Involved dads mean healthier babies.

Chapter 4 • You & Your Child's Health



As you now know, your child's health is affected by your health. Do you want your child to feel good and live a healthy life? Of course you do. One way to help your child do so is to make sure he or she maintains a healthy weight.

Today, there is a crisis in the number of children who are overweight and obese. According to the Centers for Disease Control, about 17 percent of children and teens are obese. Even more are overweight. These children are at high risk for heart disease, stroke, diabetes, some cancers, and other health problems. One of the best ways to help your child maintain a healthy weight is to model a healthy lifestyle. A child is more likely to have a healthy lifestyle if his or her father has a healthy lifestyle. How often you exercise and how healthy your diet is will affect your child's level of exercise and diet.

13 Ways You Can Help Your Child Be Healthy

Here are 13 ways you can help your child be healthy. The point is to create an “active” home with healthy eaters.

1. Make Time for Your Family to be Active Together

Schedule some time at least once a week for all the members of your family to be active together. Make sure what you do is something everyone enjoys. Try walking, riding bikes, bowling, or building a garden. Have each family member take turns choosing the activity for the week.

2. Plan Special, Active Family Trips

Active families often take active trips. Water and snow skiing, hiking, biking, and camping make great, active family trips. Keep in mind, though, that all families need some “down time,” so plan time to relax and hang out.

Chapter 5 • Helping Your Child Grow

One of the best ways to help your child grow up healthy is to know what to do based on your child's age. The following pages will give you age-specific direction on how you can take a hands-on role in encouraging your child's healthy development.

- 1. THINK** about your children's ages.
- 2. SCROLL** to the the following pages that matches their age(s).
- 3. READ** what you can do to help them grow and be healthy!

The First Year

Welcome to the first year of your child's life! Review this guide* to learn tips that will help you help your child to grow.



1st & 2nd Months

Hold, cuddle, rock, talk, sing, hug, and kiss your baby often to make him/her feel safe.

Try to console and comfort your baby even though your baby might not always calm down.

If you can't spend a lot of time with your baby, play, talk, and sing during his alert stages (dressing, bathing, feeding, walking, driving) because it is more fun for you both.

Create routines and habits when you wash, feed, and put your baby to bed. Your baby will learn to rely on you and sleep better at night.

Use toys that are right for your baby's age.

Talk with your baby's doctor if you have any questions about how your baby is growing. Don't be afraid to talk about how you are doing as a dad.

Tips for Raising Healthy Kids: The Guide for learning to live healthy and raise healthy kids

NFI has served organizations working with fathers for two decades, and now, we have made our fatherhood advice available in a downloadable PDF file. The structure of each guide allows an organization to customize a discussion with dads in any way you want; or lets any dad use the resource at his own pace! Some ideas for using the guides:

Share the guides with as many dads as you like.

- Print the PDF and give to the dads you serve, review it with them 1-on-1 or in a small group, or email it to them to read on a computer, tablet, or smart phone on their own time. You can even give them to moms to share with dads!
- This guide can reinforce (but not replace) the 24/7 Dad® program or any other fatherhood program you currently provide.
- Give away copies of the guides to the dads you serve our skill-building resources at the tips of their fingers so that they can be great dads.

Download Tips For Raising Healthy Kids today!



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